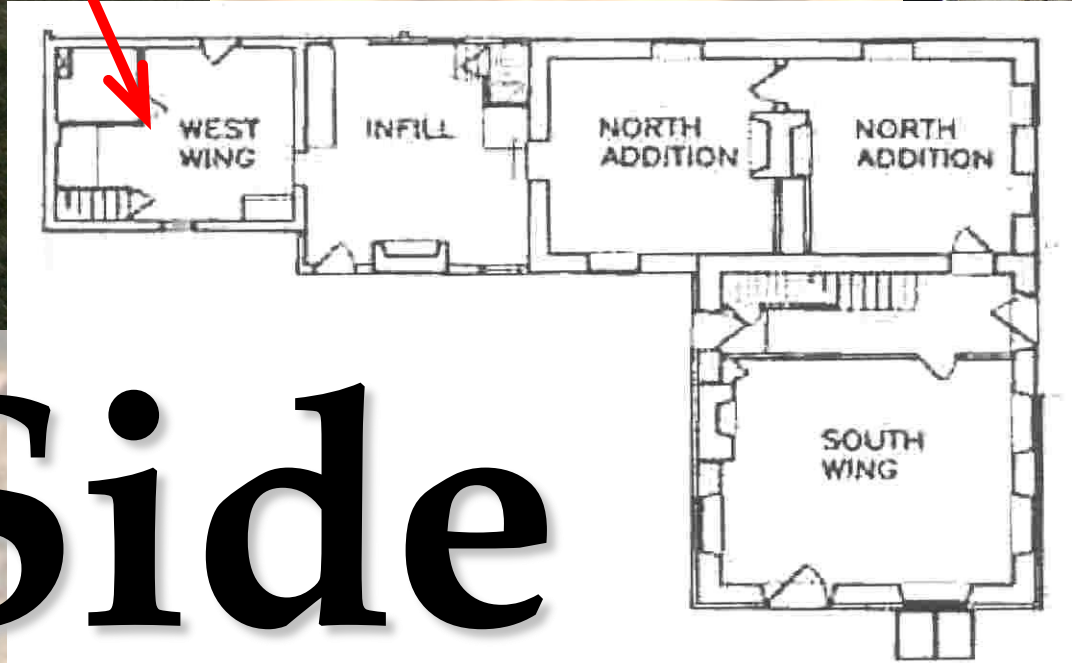




The Best House, also known as L'Hermitage, is a late 18th century farmhouse and a contributing structure to the Monocacy National Battlefield. The exterior form of the house illustrates its evolution, beginning c.1794 with the *South Wing* which consisted of the three south bays of the masonry section of the structure, and features French Colonial and Caribbean Island influences. The *North Addition* expanded the east elevation to five bays and added Federal characteristics to the structure (c.1825). Lastly, a one-and-a-half story log structure (the *West Wing*) was incorporated into the house with a two-story wood frame *Infill*.



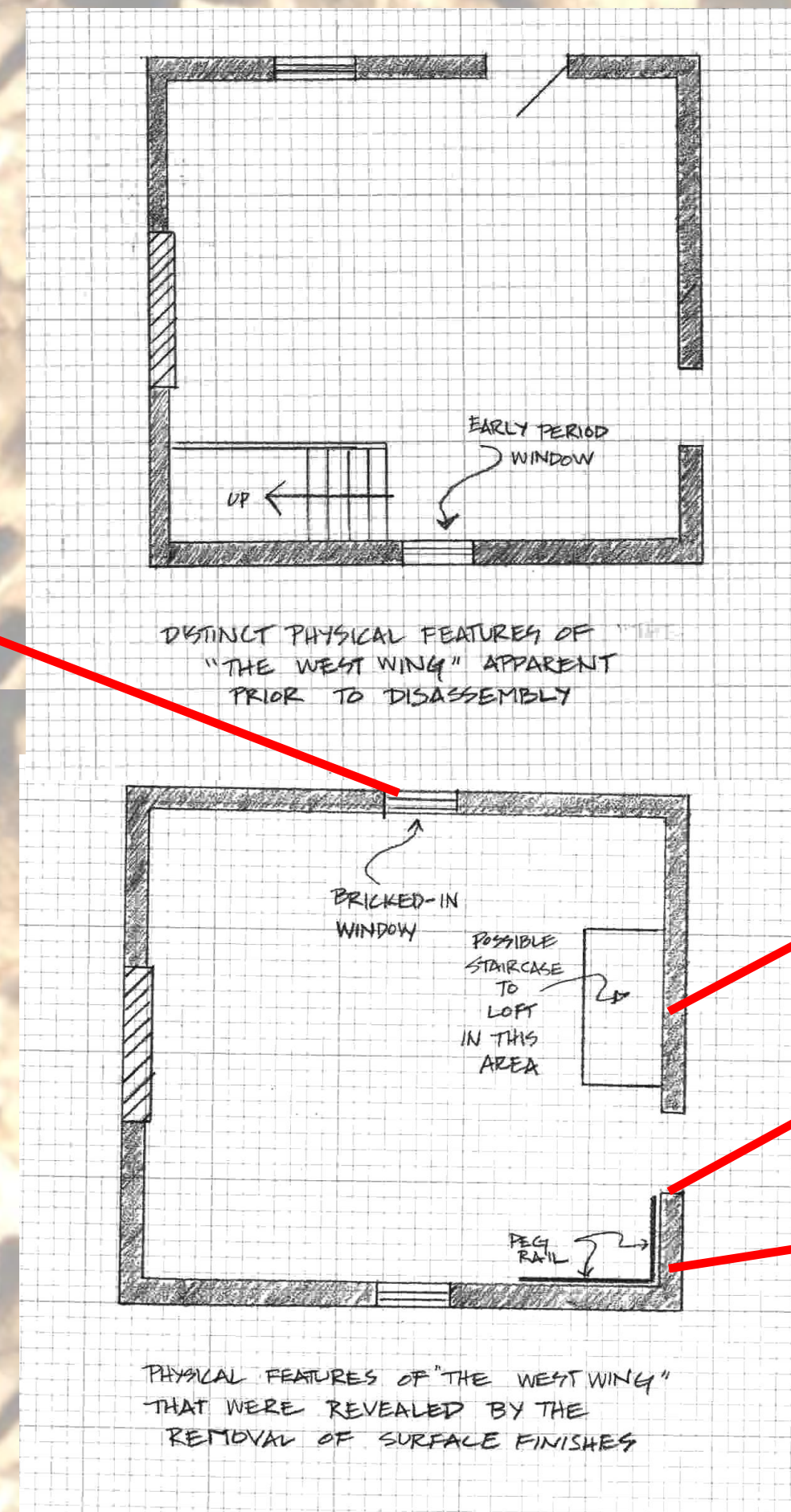
The Bright Side of Termite Damage

In 2006, the Monocacy National Battlefield hired the Historic Preservation Training Center to paint the exterior of the Best House. Extensive termite damage resulted in the need to remove many layers of surface finishes in order to address the structural deficiencies. But the removal of layers of plaster and drywall revealed previously unknown details about what is considered to have been the kitchen outbuilding.

1. Exposed framing in the ceiling indicates an unknown stair opening along the east wall. Plaster lath was carried over the suspected stair opening, indicating the opening was no longer in use when the room was plastered. The southwest stairs were probably built at the same time as the initial plaster campaign.
2. The room was whitewashed prior to plastering and apparently did serve as a kitchen as indicated by the dark staining on the ceiling.
3. An undetected window was uncovered. The window had been bricked in, apparently in an effort to provide symmetry to the window pattern on the north elevation exterior. This window is directly across from an early-period window on the south elevation.
4. An early doorframe was discovered, proving that the doorway had been in that location through much of the structure's history.
5. Though the room had been painted many shades of blue over the years, this brilliant blue appears to be the earliest paint color on the plaster walls.
6. A nailer board or peg board had been installed in the southeast corner. The board was used as a nailer when a cupboard was built into this corner. This board is still attached to the back of the cupboard.



3. Interior and exterior views of the newly discovered window opening. The yellow ochre color was seen on no other features in the room.



1. This framing indicates the location of a previous stairway



4. Remnants of the early door frame are extant



5. This wall color may have been created by a Prussian Blue pigment



6. A nailer board or pegboard

